

# Rep. Stupak named a "budget hawk"

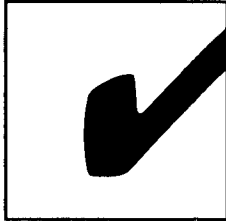
WASHINGTON - The Concord Coalition has released its fifth annual Tough Choices Deficit Reduction Scorecard. The rating scores members of Congress on their fiscal responsibility during the 1997 congressional session, and it gives special acknowledgment to those members committed to this effort.

Rep. Bart Stupak made the group's "budget hawk" honor roll by scoring in the 88th percentile. This ranking is based on weighted tallies from 18 key votes used to assess the commitment of members of Congress to fiscal responsibility. The votes were chosen because they demonstrate commitment to changing the deficit through spending or tax decisions. Key votes offered a chance to eliminate or reduce spending for

pork-barrel projects or to eliminate big-ticket projects that can't be afforded right now. These important floor decisions promised to make government more efficient and they involved important procedural issues affecting how U.S. government budgeting decisions would be made in the future. There were 63 members of the U.S. House of Representatives and 17 members of the U.S. Senate on the bipartisan honor roll.

"Since 1993 I have been part of an effort in Washington to reduce the cost of federal services and to bring active, efficient government services to all Americans," Stupak said in response to the Coalition's list.

"The efforts of groups like the Concord Coalition are welcomed in order to spotlight these efforts in a positive manner and nonpartisan spirit."



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Official business



*Bart Stupak*  
M.C.  
Bulk Rate  
W/S Carrier Route

Web: [stupak@mail.house.gov](mailto:stupak@mail.house.gov)  
E-mail: <http://www.house.gov/stupak/>

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## Drilling ban intended to protect Great Lakes

To protect the Great Lakes from a possible disaster caused by a leak from an oil well drilled beneath the lakes, Rep. Bart Stupak has introduced legislation in the U.S. House that would ban drilling in the Great Lakes and what petroleum explorers call "directional drilling."

Slant or directional drilling is a technique whereby a well is drilled at an angle, allowing an oil deposit to be reached from a drilling site that is not located directly above it.

In the case of a state like Michigan, their proposed regulations would prohibit drilling rigs from

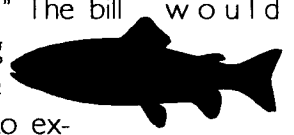
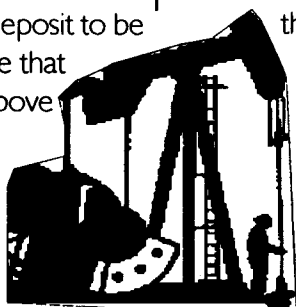
being sited within 1,500 feet from the shore. While this may protect the quality and appearance of the shoreline, it certainly does not prevent a well being drilled on an angle to a potential oil deposit beneath the Great Lakes.

There are a number of risks posed by this kind of drilling. The most obvious threat to the quality of the lakes is the escape of oil or salt water through a fracture in the rock through which the new well is being drilled.

Salt water is highly associated with oil and may be present in a ratio as

high as six parts salt water to one part oil. A salt water intrusion would be just as devastating to the environment and water quality of the Great Lakes as an oil leak." The bill would ban any drilling under the Great Lakes to extract oil and gas.

The value of the Great Lakes to the quality of life of much of the United States is almost incalculable," Rep. Stupak said. "The idea that this environment could be damaged or destroyed by a preventable accident should be a matter of great concern for every person living around these vital bodies waters."



# Insurance coverage issues spotlighted

Rep. Bart Stupak is exploring ways to make health insurance more affordable. Two ideas have emerged, full disclosure of "customary and reasonable cost" and affordability of health insurance premiums under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985, COBRA.

Insurance companies claim they will pay the "customary and reasonable cost" to health care providers, but they do not disclose this cost. Health care providers disclose the cost of a medical procedure, but some insurance companies will not tell you how much their "customary and reasonable cost" will pay. Thus, you cannot determine what your out-of-pocket individual expenses will be.

This failure to disclose "customary and reasonable cost" prevents you from negotiating with your health care provider, from knowing what charges are appropriate and from scrutinizing your bill. To control medical costs, a knowledgeable

consumer armed with "reasonable and customary cost" will be an invaluable fighter against waste, fraud and abuse. You pay for the coverage; you have a right to know exactly what should be paid!

Another idea is keeping health insurance premiums under

COBRA affordable. A family is usually covered by an employee "group" health insurance plan. When the employed spouse dies or there is a divorce, the individual spouse may elect to continue their health insurance under COBRA. The individual spouse is now charged for an "individual" policy and not at the employee "group" rate.

In each case, the insurance company insures the same number of people, liability is the same, yet the insurance company charges the COBRA policyholder approximately 10 times more a month! "Families struggling to overcome difficult circumstances," says Rep. Stupak, "should still be able to afford health insurance."

**You pay for the coverage; you have a right to know exactly what should be paid!**

## District gets grants for more than 150 law enforcement officers

In his State of the Union speech in 1994, President Clinton pledged to put 100,000 additional police officers on America's streets by the year 2000. Since that time, cities, villages and counties in Northern Michigan have received \$11.5 million in grants to hire 153 law enforcement officers under the program known as Community Oriented Policing Services, or, as it is commonly called, COPS.

From the time the first grants were awarded in 1994, community officials have offered broad praise for the program, from the simplicity of its paperwork to the incredible value the program



adds to small communities and rural counties in terms of enhanced law enforcement.

These additional law enforcement officers mean more than just extra names on department roster. More police officers means the establishment of school liaison programs. It means more road patrols to remote areas, and it means bike and foot patrols that put officers in direct contact with downtown merchants to assist with law enforcement problems unique to that part of the community.

The program has included a number of innovative features, all directed toward the goal of reducing crime by putting law enforcement officers on the street, where they can best serve the community. Among the innovations are

grant awards that permit communities to hire civilians to handle paperwork or to purchase needed equipment.

As founder and co-chairman of the House Law Enforcement Caucus and as co-chairman of the Juvenile Justice and Crime Task Force, Rep. Bart Stupak has worked with the administration and with House leadership on a wide variety of law enforcement issues. The COPS program, however, with its simple paperwork and direct local impact, stands as a unique model for other grant programs.

"The Caucus will continue to study law enforcement issues and to develop programs that bring assistance directly to communities to reduce traffic congestion and improve crime prevention, crime investigation and the quality of life for all residents," Rep. Stupak said.

## Office efficiency allows return of budget funds

Following a pattern set during previous terms in office, Rep. Bart Stupak again did not use all of the funds allotted for operating his congressional offices. This year he saved taxpayers nearly \$35,000 in unused funds, bringing the total to nearly \$166,000 over his five years in office.

Rep. Stupak has consistently set a fiscally conservative example in his congressional office and supported action by the House Oversight Committee during the 104th Congress

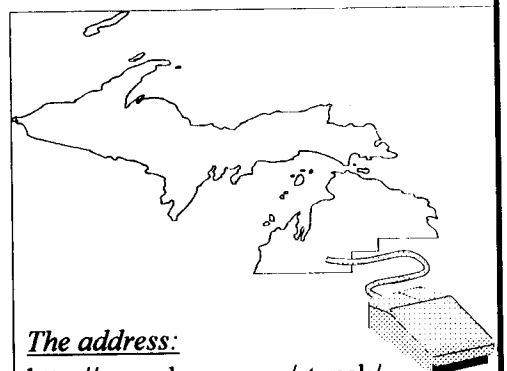
to reduce the amount of money members may spend under the frank.

Rep. Stupak also authored legislation in 1993 which required any authorized unused funds from House members be applied to deficit reduction, and in 1995 the House approved this legislative idea. He expressed pride in a staff which, he said, "has been able to provide excellent constituent service to this large congressional district in a low-cost, efficient way."

## Updated Web site provides statewide links

An updated version of the World Wide Web site for Rep. Bart Stupak lets Web browsers jump to a sites in northern Michigan that offer university enrollment information, upcoming municipal events, and national parks. The site continues to provide links to the U.S. Capitol and to the Library of Congress, features that are popular with prospective visitors to the nation's capital and with people researching legislation. The site includes information on the U.S. Military Academies and on tours of the White House, FBI, and other prominent federal sites. "As the World Wide

Web matures," Rep. Stupak said, "these links will be informative and in many ways will aid in the long-term growth and development of Northern Michigan."



**The address:**

<http://www.house.gov/stupak/>